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Identical letters dated 9 July 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to bring to your attention the comments of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) for the period from 1 March to 28 June 2013:

The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the Syrian Arab Army has continued to defend all Syrian territory and respond to armed terrorist groups. By taking the border areas between Syria and neighbouring States as a starting point for their criminal operations, the groups have endangered the stability of those areas. One example is the Syrian-Lebanese border, which has become a corridor for the repeated infiltration of *takfirist* terrorist fighters and various types of weapon and ammunition. All of this takes place with the full support of well-known Lebanese political parties with a view to participating in terrorist acts aimed at shedding Syrian blood. Official Syrian and Lebanese sources have uncovered numerous smuggling operations in the area. Such practices are a clear violation of article 3 of the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Lebanese Republic, which provides that because the security of the two countries is interconnected, Lebanon should not allow itself to become a corridor or a base for any force, State or organization that intends to compromise its safety or that of Syria.

The Syrian Arab Republic is surprised that the report raises the subject of Syrian migrants beyond the country's borders, an issue that falls outside the mandate specified in Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the migrants should return to their homes and that their suffering should not be exploited for political ends. It recalls that the political programme put forward by President Bashar Al-Assad to resolve the crisis in Syria is based on the provision of the necessary guarantees for the return of Syrian citizens who have left because of the events and the facilitation of their return through the border crossings.

As regards Palestine refugees, the Syrian Arab Republic recalls that the problem of the Palestinian camps stems from the fact that armed terrorist groups have entered those camps. Anyone who claims concern for the Palestinians should put pressure on the countries backing the armed terrorist groups to put an end to

their agitation in Palestinian camps in Syria, refrain from using the camps as a starting point for terrorist operations, and withdraw from them so that the inhabitants can return safely to their homes. The Syrian Government continues to stress that the camps should be spared the effects of the crisis in Syria.

The Israeli claims concerning the transfer of weapons from Syria to Hizbullah, and the statements by Israeli officials that steps could be taken to prevent such activities, are a desperate attempt on the part of Israel to distract attention from the real threat to the security of the region as a whole, namely Israel's own aggressive policies. Instead of making provocative statements, Israel should cease supporting armed terrorist groups and facilitating their passage into Syria. Syria has drawn attention to such support in numerous identical letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, and reiterates its surprise that the reports of the Secretary-General should continue to refer to the Israeli claims despite stating that they cannot be verified.

Numerous reports of the Secretary-General on implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) have referred repeatedly to alleged weapons transfers from Syria to Hizbullah. Such references are inconsistent with the reality of the arms trafficking operations that have taken place on the Lebanese-Syrian border with the aim of supporting infiltrated armed terrorist groups. Those activities are backed by well-known States and parties that do not have the stability of Lebanon, Syria or the region at heart. Those actors openly support the groups; indeed, as and when the Syrian Arab Army makes progress in countering the groups, they are all the more prepared to intensify their support.

The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the delineation of the border is an issue of sovereignty. It considers that in referring to the subject, the report has raised a bilateral issue that should be decided by the States when the conditions on the ground permit. It reiterates that the delineation of borders in the Shab'a Farms area should take place after the Israeli occupation of that area has come to an end, something that requires the international will to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the Madrid terms of reference and in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic
to the United Nations